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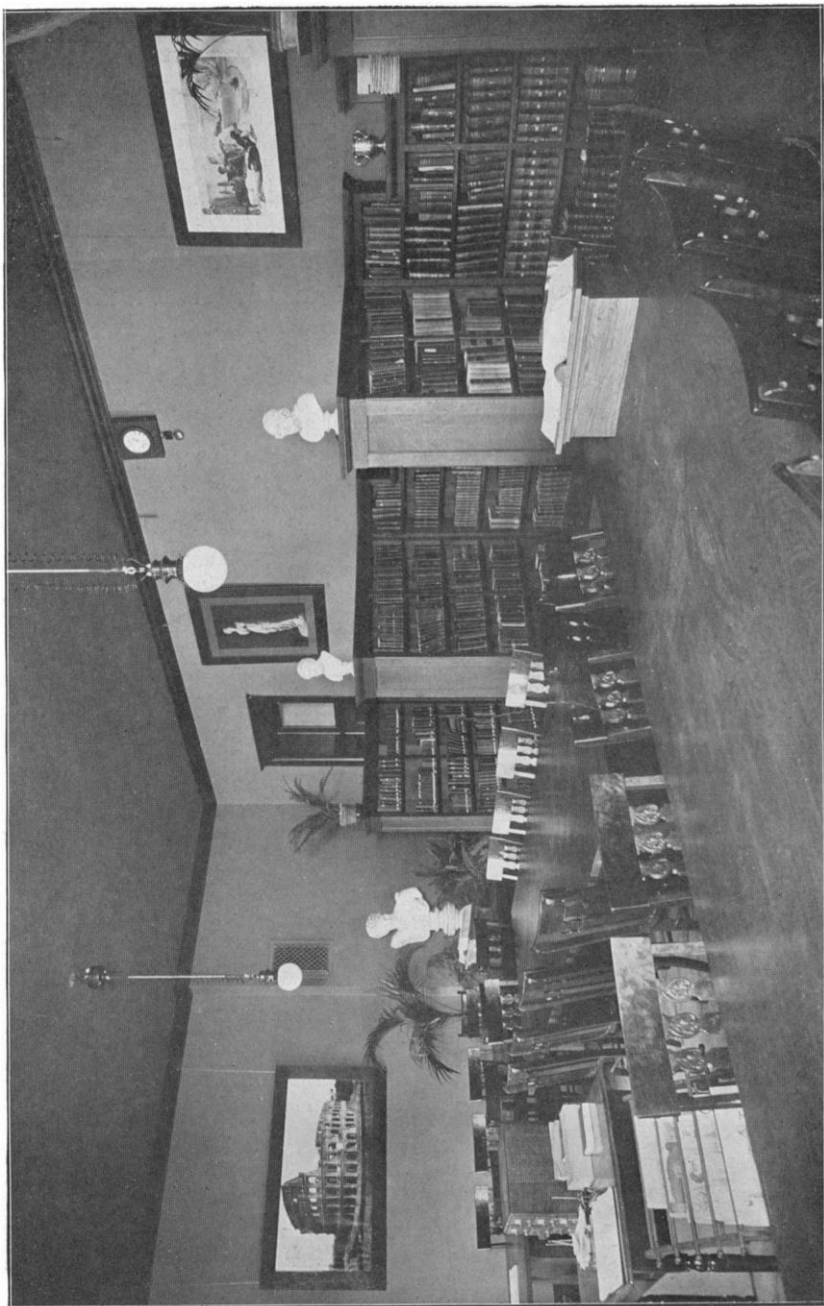
THE DIFFICULTY OF THE HIGH-SCHOOL LIBRARY, AND A SUGGESTION

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The editorial in the *School Review* of December, 1906, the article in the *Educational Review* of February, 1907, by William Newham Carlton, numerous references to the subject in the professional press, and many papers read before educational clubs and societies, are indications that the high schools are becoming alive to their own special library problem.

Library problems are mainly problems of money. It is very well to have in mind such a library in the high school as the above-mentioned editorial suggests, but it would cost very much more than high schools as a rule are prepared to spend. A thousand dollars expended for laboratory equipment will make some show, but the same amount devoted to the library will be hardly more than a beginning. A high-school library, to contain the books, first of all, to be used in connection with the studies of the school should certainly have about three or four thousand volumes. Probably a good working high-school library would have five thousand volumes. The books for such a library would cost from six to seven thousand dollars. The public libraries have proved that a certain amount of preparation is needed to change a miscellaneous lot of books into a library. This preparation is now pretty uniform and involves a great amount of detail. At the Albany Library School two



THE HIGH-SCHOOL LIBRARY, WAUSAU, WISCONSIN

years are required to teach a college graduate how to make and administer a library. However great the learning and culture may be, one cannot with any show of economy establish a library without this knowledge. In addition to the books, magazines, and general library equipment, there must therefore be a trained librarian, and this very few high schools realize. The teachers of literature, aided by pupils, cannot organize a library. Not until these facts are fully appreciated can a high school have a good working library. Moreover, a library is not maintained free of cost. The librarian's salary, new books, rebinding, supplies, and magazines are all costly but necessary items.

It is just as well to look such facts in the face when we discuss libraries for high schools. We may well question if it is worth while to have such a library at all. Could not this money be administered to better advantage for the schools in other ways? Frankly, I do not profess to have a decided opinion as to this point.

In the *Educational Review* for February Mr. William Newham Carlton has this to say:

The municipal and town libraries are now in such close touch with the secondary schools that the pupils have every opportunity to acquire a knowledge of the more general and universal bibliographical tools and literary aids. Well-trained assistants in scores of reference rooms are actually imparting this information to hundreds of scholars from the public and private schools of their localities. This instruction might *profitably be made more regular and formal by arrangement with the school authorities*; it is my belief that it would be accepted more readily and more seriously by students of high-school age than by those who have entered college; and such instruction would carry the average student just as far in knowledge of and ability to use the common bibliographical works as an elementary college course in bibliography.

The italics are my own, and I desire to emphasize them to the fullest possible extent. If the school and library authorities will make some arrangement for the public library to meet the wishes of the school, it is evident that much good will be accomplished without the duplication of a great deal of material. As such a burden would add materially to the expenses of the public library, it would be only fair for the school authorities to see that

the appropriating body of the town take this into consideration when making the annual budget.

Public libraries in this country have done and are doing a great deal of work in connection with the schools, mainly the public elementary schools. Very little of this is organized.

Perhaps a brief statement of work with public elementary schools may be cited as suggestive of a possible solution of the high-school library problem.

In all of the public schools, elementary and high, in the city of New York, the Public Library has, with the approval of the Board of Education, erected a large bulletin board, lettered "Public Library Bulletin." On this bulletin board there is a permanent notice giving the address of the nearest branch library, and a list of all other branches. On this permanent notice are the special library rules, devised to give teachers the utmost possible freedom of books. From time to time notices of new books, new rules—or rather the abolishment of old rules—notice of special interest to the teachers and pupils, etc., are posted. In particular, however, the bulletin boards were erected to bring notices to the teachers of the grades, which notices it is expected will bring the libraries and the schools into a closer relationship. A special placard is printed, enough copies are sent to every school to post one for each of the upper five grades in each classroom, to post one on the "Public Library Bulletin," and to give a set to the principal. The placards read as follows:

THE BRANCH OF THIS LIBRARY LOCATED AT . . . will be prepared to give special attention to pupils in this grade who desire to consult books of reference in connection with their grade work.

Term plans as published in recent issues of *School Work* and of *New York Teachers' Monographs* will be used as a basis for the preparation of material which will be set aside in the library for the use of pupils between the dates indicated in the following schedule. [Then follows a schedule of subjects provided in the course of study, for each of the five grades, a separate card being printed for each grade. The card then continues:] This is a tentative effort to bring the schools, the museums, and the branch libraries into a closer relationship.

Upon consultation with the librarian of the branch library, arrangements may be made for a considerable deviation from this schedule, both as to date and as to subject.

The use of indexes, tables of contents, catalogues, etc., will be explained to pupils when necessary.

Pupils of this class are invited to use the library. They will be made welcome, and will find many delightful stories and attractive books on a wide variety of subjects of particular interest to boys and girls. These and other books may be borrowed for their own use at home and for their parents.

In addition to books printed in the English language, the library has collections printed in many foreign languages, and for the blind.

The library is always glad to send applications to teachers for distribution in the classrooms.

Reference to the museums is made by giving as footnotes to the subjects indicated in the graded schedules brief descriptions of some of the exhibits in the museums and in other places in the city which bear on the work of the grade. For example, one such footnote reads as follows:

NOTE.—In the Foyer or Entrance Hall of the American Museum of Natural History, Seventy-seventh Street and Central Park West, there is an exhibit illustrating the solar system. Suspended in the center of this hall is a five-inch incandescent globe, representing the sun. Standing directly beneath this, one may see other globes corresponding to the various planets of the solar system, which are installed in such a manner as to show the relative size of each and also its relative distance from the sun.

Thus, therefore, the library has supplied each classroom of the upper elementary grades with a placard on which is an invitation to use the nearest branch, a statement that the library will render special aid in connection with the graded work, and statements concerning other interesting features of the city of special interest to the child of that particular grade.

I go to some length to describe these details in order to suggest that something of the kind could and should be done by the libraries for the high schools. This has been suggested to each of the high-school principals of this city. I understand that the matter is to be presented to the High School Principals' Association for action. The library has asked the principals to indicate along what lines its branches can be made of the most use to the students. The recommendations of the principals will be given the utmost consideration. It is hoped that some uniform scheme of co-operation may be worked out.

It is probable that the relations between the libraries and the high schools will grow closer and closer. The libraries, for example, need junior assistants with a certain amount of library training. The technical high schools could well afford a class in library economy if a library of the town would recognize this training as equal to the first year of work in the library, as equal to one-half of the time given in the apprentice class of the library, etc. If the library has a certain amount of oversight of the high-school training class, it is probable that the school could make very good terms for its graduates. The practical work of such a class should be done in the public library.

If a high school can afford a library that is really a library, undoubtedly it would be for the good of the school to have one, large, sunny, and bright, with well-designed and comfortable furniture, and with just the right books and magazines for the boys and girls. But what would the hours of opening be for such a library—from 9 A. M. to 9 P. M.? On Saturdays and holidays and in the summer would this library be open to the students? If not, the waste would be very great.

The public library is a part of the life which the high schools are fitting the students to understand and appreciate. It is to the public library that they must go in after-life for the majority of their researches and special studies. The public library is gradually becoming a working-tool for high-school graduates, and it would seem that the high schools should teach the use of that tool, not of another tool, the high-school library, which will be left behind on the day of graduation. Much, of course, may be learned of libraries and library method in the high-school library, but the library habit, the habit of going to the public library for all sorts of information of little or of great interest, cannot be acquired from the high-school library; and it is this habit which the high schools should do all in their power to form. It may almost be said that the good high-school library, duplicating a good public library in part, may be a very good thing for the school, but for the pupils its influence would be regrettable.

Let no one gather from this article that I would advocate

the abolishment of the high-school library. On the contrary, it should be developed along lines which, so far as my information is concerned, do not seem to be formulated. Certainly present methods should not be tolerated, nor yet should the high schools seek to duplicate the work of the public library.